

ments made by the Association did not confirm the common belief regarding the indefinite vitality of certain seeds, for instance, the mummy seed. If any naturalist would suggest a better mode of preserving the plants, it would be well to institute a new set of experiments; but as far as was at present known, the plan that was adopted was the most likely to preserve their vitality.

Professor GEORGE WILSON read a paper on the *Employment of the Living Electric Fishes as medical Shock Machines*, of which the following is an abstract:—The author, in prosecuting inquiries into the early history of electrical machines, did not originally contemplate going farther back than the seventeenth century, or commencing with any earlier instrument than that of Otto Guericke. His attention had been turned to the living torpedo as a remedial agent, and he now felt satisfied that living electrical fish were the most familiar and earliest electrical instruments employed by mankind. He adduced the testimony of Galen and others in proof of the practice, and as proving that “shocks” had been used as a remedy in paralytic and neuralgic affections before the Christian era. Still higher antiquity had been claimed for the electric *Silurus*, on the supposition that its Arabic name, “Raad,” signified “Thunder Fish” and implied the nature of the shock; but the best Arabic scholars had shown that this was not the case. In proof of the generality of the practice of employing zoo-electrical machines, he alluded to the remedial application of the torpedo by the Abyssinians—of the *gymnotus* by the South American Indians, and the recently discovered electrical fish by the dweller, on the Old Callabar River, which falls into the Bight of Benin. The native women, he said, had a habit of keeping one or more of those fishes in water, and of bathing their children therein with the view of strengthening them by the shocks which they received, which were very powerful. Having observed on the proofs of the antiquity as well as generality of the practice under notice, he concluded by directing the attention of naturalists to the probability of additional kinds of electrical fishes being discovered, and to the importance of obtaining the views of the natives familiar with them in reference to the sources of their therapeutic employment.

Dr. REDFERN read a *Notice of a Simple Method of Applying the Compound Microscope to the examination of the Contents of Aquavivaria*. He stated that he had for some time made use of a very simple and convenient arrangement for examining objects